

Session	Session 8 Keynote 2
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Title of presentation	A living laboratory? Ethics and experimentality in humanitarian innovation
Abstract	<p>The 2010 Haiti earthquake has been described as a living laboratory in which innovative technologies were used by local and international organizations to assist with search and rescue, relief coordination, and live mapping. It has proven to be a key inflection point for humanitarian innovation. Since then, each major humanitarian crisis has been associated with the uptake of new innovations and, in particular, novel information and communication technologies. The humanitarian innovation movement has also catalyzed developments such as new funding structures, humanitarian innovation services and labs within and outside humanitarian agencies, and closer collaborations among humanitarians, the tech sector, and networks of online volunteers. Together, these developments have contributed to changes in how humanitarian action is being carried out, as well as shifts in the language and culture of humanitarian action as innovation became a prominent paradigm in the field. While many innovations lead to improvements in service delivery, they also warrant attention regarding ethical norms that should govern their development and implementation.</p> <p>In this presentation, I examine ethical implications of the experimental nature of humanitarian innovation, including issues related to the targeting and prioritization of innovations, the way that relationships may be changed or created, what might be displaced by innovation processes, how the culture of innovation is influencing the humanitarian sector, and the nature of risks and potential blind spots for humanitarian innovation. I then propose values-sensitive humanitarian innovation as a model to foster ethical attentiveness across the innovation cycle, linking innovations with the ethical commitments of humanitarians, integrating oversight proportionate to the risks involved, evaluating and sharing insights gained, and engaging with local communities.</p> <p>The description of humanitarian innovation as occurring in the living laboratory of crisis is suggestive. It points to the need to be ethically responsive to how values, such as justice, respect for persons and communities, minimizing harms and promoting accountability, are implicated by and potentially challenged through humanitarian innovation processes</p>
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